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WILLIAM WINDOM.

WINDOM

THE MAN AND THE SCHOOL

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Windom—The Man—The School

THE MAN

Because I want the students and friends of Windom Institute to know how great and how good a man their school seeks to honor I set down here in briefest form an account of William Windom's illustrious career.

His English ancestors, both paternal and maternal, were Quakers, who, coming first to Virginia, settled in Ohio two generations before Windom's birth. The language and customs of the Quakers and their deeply religious spirit marked the pioneer home where William Windom was born on the "10th day of the 5th month," in 1827.

When the lad was ten years old the family removed to Knox county, in about the center of Ohio, which was then remote from markets and a frontier community indeed. Communication with the outer world came only at rare intervals, the settlement being self-sufficient in the manufacture of clothing and the provision of most of its wants. There was poverty, if the lack of money makes poverty; there was competency, if comfortable shelter, warm clothing, plentiful larders and simple wants make a competency. The farmer's boy learned at any rate to be undismayed at hard work, and all the discouragements and difficulties of a frontierman's life. An obstacle was only something

to be calmly met and overcome. A difficulty was only a challenge to cheerful effort. Pluck, patience, persistence, indomitable industry and high courage—these the farm gave. High moral and religious standards, unswerving integrity, unwavering faith and an undying reverence for God's day and God's book—these that simple home gave him

But faith stirs ambition and the young man's heart became set on gaining an education and entering the profession of the law. In the Quaker home this announcement produced consternation. A Quaker become a lawyer and contend in the courts! Heaven forbid! But William was a good son and true, and finally won the family to the support of his plans.

Living in this remote neighborhood the lad was out of touch with such systematic courses of study as the public schools of the city demanded, but fortunately there existed at Martinsburg, Ohio, an academy over which there presided a most competent and thorough instructor who, having the discernment to perceive young Windom's unusual abilities, took a deep personal interest in conducting his studies, and here he completed his general education. For the study of the law he entered the office of Judge R. C. Hurd, of Mount Vernon, and in 1850, at the age of twenty-three, he was admitted to the bar. The summers of the years of preparation were spent in the rugged work of the farm, and at least one of the winters found William Windom behind the school-teacher's desk. No farmer's child toils harder for an academy education today than did William Windom more than fifty years ago, and of this early toil and diffi-

culty the mature statesman was never ashamed.

Mr. Windom spent five years in the practice of law in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, and was at the very outset of his career elected prosecuting attorney for Knox Co. But the rapidly growing territory of Minnesota seemed to beckon, him and there, in the town of Winona, he hung out his sign as attorney and counselor at law, in the year 1855, and challenged Fortune.

The abilities and many attractive personal qualities of the young attorney soon won for him both friends and clients, and the following year his prosperity was such as to warrant him in assuming new responsibilities.

His choice had long before been made, and in August, 1856, he married in Warwick, Mass., Miss Ellen Towne Hatch, daughter of the Rev. R. C. Hatch, and established the happiest of homes. It may here be added that Mr. Windom himself ascribed the measure of success which henceforth attended him largely to the felicities of his domestic life, which he enjoyed to an unusual degree.

Three years after his arrival in Winona the attorney, now in his thirty-second year, was nominated and elected to Congress, thus leaving practically for all the future the professional for the public career. Four times was he re-elected to this honorable and responsible position, thus completing a continuous service of ten years, covering the most crucial period in our country's history.

His eminent service in the House led naturally to promotion to the United States Senate. This came originally through his appointment in 1869 to fill an unexpired term; but the honor was confirmed by the

Minnesota Legislature through his election in 1871 and his re-election in 1877. During this term Senator Windom had the honor of having his name presented as candidate for the Presidency to the National Republican Convention (1880) where, for twenty-eight ballots it was kept to the front. This doubtless led to his entering the Cabinet as Secretary of the Treasury (1881) through the invitation of President Garfield. When death terminated the administration of his chief, Secretary Windom resigned his portfolio; but was returned to the Senate in the fall of 1881 to serve the remainder of that term. His value to the great interests of the Treasury Department was again recognized in 1889 by President Harrison, who called him to resume the honors and burdens of that department. It was nearly two years that he had served his country in this position—a time of peculiar responsibility to the financial officer of the government—when that memorable banquet and great speech were given in New York.

The Board of Trade and Transportation of New York, perhaps more than any other organization, has its hand upon the pulse of our national life. When, therefore, the over-burdened Secretary of the Treasury was asked to give the address at their great annual banquet he put aside all personal considerations and availed himself of this opportunity for addressing himself to the ear of the nation upon those great questions which were fundamental to the prosperity of his country.

On the evening of Thursday, the 29th of January,

1891, there assembled at Delmonico's in New York City, at the invitation of the Board, a company of notable statesmen and the great merchants of the city, to listen to the Secretary's address. William Windom was surrounded at the banquet board by such men as Benjamin F. Tracy, then Secretary of the Navy; Darwin S. James, Secretary of the Board; John W. Longley, Attorney General, Nova Scotia; Murat Halstead; Thos. F. Bayard, Ex-Secretary of State; W. H. H. Miller, then Attorney General; Wilfred Laurier, later Premier of Canada; William H. Webb and Orlando B. Parker; with Ambrose Snow, as President of the Board.

Secretary Windom, greeted with tumultuous applause, when introduced by Judge Arnoux, announced his subject as "Our Country's Prosperity Dependent Upon Its Instruments of Commerce." Two phases of the subject were treated in the forty-three minutes allowed;—"Transportation, the movement by which commodities change place, and Money, the vehicle by which commodities change ownership." Something of the breadth, scope and profundity of this historic address may be inferred from this division of the subject. The speech itself is thus characterized by Attorney General Miller: "It approved itself as a great speech and it was delivered with a fervor and earnestness and an oratorical power which I had never before observed in Mr. Windom, and which I have rarely seen surpassed by anyone. It was a great speech delivered in a masterly manner, and it produced a profound impression on all who heard it."

In spite of a specific request from the speaker that applause be omitted, when he had been interrupted, the lofty sentiments and sterling convictions of the address called forth repeated applause and approval with almost every paragraph. At its close the enthusiasm of the great assembly could scarce be restrained and even after the "bewildering" applause at the close, and when the toast-master was about to resume, at a call from the audience, the guests arose in a body and gave three vociferous cheers for the Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Windom bowed his thanks. The introduction of the next speaker had just begun when those near the Secretary were startled to see his head droop as in faintness. He was conveyed immediately to an ante-room and all possible effort made to restore him, but in vain. The spirit of the great Christian statesman had, in that moment of triumph, left the earthly house for the heavenly home.

The event, so dramatic in its sadness, made a profound impression upon the nation. Amid honors rarely accorded except to a dead president the body was borne to Washington. By order of President Harrison, issued by Secretary Blaine, all departments of the Government were ordered to manifest due respect to William Windom's memory, and the Treasury in all its branches was draped in mourning thirty days. Ex-Presidents, Cabinet officers, Foreign Ambassadors, Senators, Congressmen, and men prominent in public life joined in voicing their high esteem and their grief. The great papers issued eulogies and many political and commercial bodies passed resolutions of

condolence. The grief and tribute to the man were national and profound.

It only remains to this sketch to say a few words about the achievements of Secretary Windom.

Coming into Congress (1859) at a time when North and South were preparing for the grapple of the Civil War, Mr. Windom had exceptional opportunity of serving his country in the legislative side of this crucial experience. He was a trusted friend and adviser of President Lincoln. His committee positions involved the highest responsibilities and he was notable in the debates of those stirring days of war and reconstruction. In the Senate Mr. Windom occupied the places of influence. He was at one time chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, and later chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations. When the Senate appointed a special committee on Transportation Routes to the Seaboard, Senator Windom was made the chairman. There were, practically, only local lines of railroad from the interior and no improvements at Sault Ste. Marie. Upon this great problem Mr. Windom spent months of investigation and study. The report has become one of our great historical documents, and has been a large factor in the establishing of our present great systems of transportation by sea and land. Senator Hoar in referring to this report on the floor of the Senate said, "I think Senators who have attended to the subject will agree generally that the most valuable state paper of modern times published by this country is the report made by the late Senator and Secretary of the Treasury, Mr.

Windom, from the Committee on Transportation Routes to the Seaboard, on the general question of the relation of the railroads to the commerce of the country, and the means of controlling the railroads in the interests of commerce. That most instructive, valuable and profound report brings the subject down to the year 1873."

Mr. Windom's notable achievements in the Secretaryship will give his name lasting prominence with those of Hamilton, Gallatin and Chase in their administration of the Treasury. During his last administration, he came to the aid of the nation on the verge of a panic by putting some $75,000,000 suddenly into circulation. Amid the financial uncertainties of the nation about the year 1890 his administration of the Treasury steadied our whole financial system. The refunding of the national debt during Garfield's administration is perhaps the broadest foundation for his lasting fame. The outgoing administration had failed finally to pass the refunding act to take care of upwards of $700,000,000 of bonds coming due July 1st, 1881, and bearing 5 per cent and 6 per cent interest. The public credit was at stake. To allow the bonds to continue meant an unnecessary expense of $11,000,000 annually. Many proposed an extra session of Congress. Into this emergency Secretary Windom came when he took the portfolio. He resolved on heroic treatment, on performing what was claimed to be the impossible. He advertised the willingness of the government to exchange bonds bearing 3½ per cent for outstanding bonds, before a certain day. To the

astonishment of financiers the response was so universal that only $55,000,000 of bonds were paid and the balance of the $700,000,000 refunded at the low rate, and this without the disturbance of business or financial excitement. For this brave and skillful act the Secretary received unstinted praise from papers of all political faiths.

It remains only to bear witness to the lofty Christian character of the man. Making public profession of Christ as a young man, Mr. Windom, with modesty, bore consistent testimony to his sincere and deep religious convictions throughout his life. Whether in his home church at Winona, or in the public life in Washington, he was always the humble servant of the Great Master as well as the broad-minded Christian statesman. In the cause of the Anti-Saloon Republican convention he was an important factor. In his careful observance of the Sabbath he was noteworthy. In his interest in all that promoted the kingdom of Christ he has left an example to all of us who honor his name and memory.

Such, in brief, was the exalted man for whom our beloved school is named.

THE SCHOOL

THE SCHOOL

And now we turn to the story of the school upon which the name of this great statesman was bestowed, soon after his death, at the request of the Minnesota friends of William Windom and by consent of his family, and which stands today as his principal monument in the state which honored him with its highest offices, and which he honored in the exalted places of the nation.

In 1884 President Strong of Carleton College suggested at a meeting of the State Association of Congregational Churches, the necessity of Academies or Fitting Schools in different sections of Minnesota.

About Montevideo was a large part of the State without any such private effort to interest and help the young people in attempts to get an education. Indeed, there was hardly a boy or girl in all that region who had any aspiration for a "higher education" or comprehension of what that term stood for.

To create a new standard of culture for Western Minnesota, and to link such an effort to the inspiring forces of religion, was the thought in the minds of those who founded the Western Minnesota Seminary in 1885.

A corporation of twenty-six members, with provision as to its relation to the churches and to Carleton College, was organized to carry out the plans for this enterprise, and steps were taken for the raising of funds.

The canvass of Montevideo and vicinity resulted in pledges of $22,000, face value. This amount, consid-

ering the limited means of the givers, has rarely, if ever, been exceeded for generosity in the history of any school. To C. A. Strong belongs the honor of the first pledge—one thousand dollars. As a community the people of Montevideo have again and again shown their interest in the Academy by other generous gifts and their hearty support. The six early gifts which bespoke the interest of the outside world were the pledges of Alvin Pratt, of Manchester, N. H., for $1,000; of Mrs. Perkins, of Hartford, for $1,000; of H. W. Herrick, of Manchester, N. H., for $500; of M. A. Herrick, of Winchester, Mass., for $800; of Judge E. S. Jones, for $1,000; and that of Mrs. Irene Hale, for $500, both of Minneapolis. Friends in Manchester, N. H., in Boston and in Hartford subscribed at this time a total of about $1,500, besides the gifts mentioned above. The Northfield people, led by Rev. E. M. Williams, a director of the school, were very generous in their help, remembering, doubtless, the early struggle of their own more ambitious institution.

How each of these gifts encouraged those who felt the burden of the Academy! May the reward of these early givers be as large as was their faith and liberality!

Meanwhile, in the fall of 1885, the school was opened, if the attendance of three boys and one girl the first day may be dignified by such a phrase. An old hotel on the hill was secured and fitted up as well as the poverty of our treasury allowed. The office and parlor were recitation rooms, the dining room an assembly hall(?) while a little dingy back room served as

an art and music department. But teachers, not buildings, make a school, and in its faculty this young enterprise was most fortunate. James T. Fairchild, of Oberlin and Harvard, was the principal, a man who inherited from his father, Pres. Fairchild, an integrity and ability that were of great importance in this formative period of the school. Miss Julia V. Finney, from Carleton College, brought to the school exceptional teaching ability and a sympathy with its purposes which gave her great patience under trying circumstances. Miss Lizzie Cady, of Oberlin, had charge of the musical instruction and brought rare training to her task. Miss Minnie Bailey, from Carleton, undertook with success art instruction in the school and village.

These teachers, whose salaries were always small and often months behind, stood nobly by the young enterprise, and their unselfishness is worthy of a generous acknowledgement, and was one of the sources of the ultimate success of the school.

This early period was one of great financial difficulties. The school was almost unknown, its permanency often scoffed at both at Montevideo and abroad, scholars were slow in enlisting in its untried ranks, while our quarters were about as cold and dismal as could well be found.

This uncertainty in regard to the future embarrassed the management greatly in the collection of pledges, which had been conditioned in the minds of many subscribers on something larger than they saw.

JUDGE E. S. JONES.

At the same time it did not seem wise to embarrass the young enterprise by multiplied suits at law to enforce claims that might later be collected with good feeling among all concerned, for the friendship of these very donors was often of great importance to the school.

In this situation the corporation felt that a building was absolutely necessary, both for the sake of the now growing school and as a token of good faith and permanency to those local parties who had been induced to subscribe large sums. But although the cellar was excavated, the foundation put in and some brick purchased, we could go no further in 1887 for lack of financial backing. Indeed, our other obligations during the winter of 1887-8 often threatened to swamp the unknown school.

In one of our most depressed periods it was rumored one morning that a stranger was in town inquiring about the academy. It seems that statements of the situation had appealed to Judge E. S. Jones, of Minneapolis, so strongly that he had come to Montevideo on the night train to investigate for himself. How good that great, honest, kindly face looked to us that day as he assured us "that the school is not going to give up, it is going to succeed, and you tell them that I say so." From that day Judge Jones was our large hearted, wise friend and counselor, giving of his time and money to supplement our other efforts when he felt we had done all that could be expected of us.

The following spring we went at the building in earnest. For ten thousand dollars we attempted to build a structure that should include a heating plant,

a boarding department, recitation, music and art rooms, beside quarters for the matron, the faculty, and the girl students. It is not strange that our venture surprised us by costing a half more than was planned.

When we entered upon this expense we had the following sources from which we were promised funds: A financier had undertaken to raise $10,000 for this very purpose. As his former success in this line had been unvarying, we thought we could count on that amount, especially as a third of the sum was pledged conditionally as a start. We had at Montevideo a considerable amount due on subscription notes given which we had a right to expect we would realize on without legal suasion when our building was actually in process of construction. A promise also of $2,000 on the building had been made us by a person in a situation to secure that amount. A mortgage of $5,000 was agreed upon with parties in the East. In view of these things Judge Jones had encouraged us to proceed with our undertaking, helping us most generously with his credit. This was the situation when the officers of the institution assumed the responsibility of building.

But that was a perverse fall for our plans. The financier raised one hundred dollars and dropped his work, leaving us short the balance of the ten thousand dollars. While enough money was raised at Montevideo from pledges to pay the large freight bills, and something more, we did not realize enough to help us through. The promise of two thousand dollars help was brushed airily aside when we needed the money

so sorely. In making final arrangements for the loan on mortgage the attorney decided that there was a fatal error in our articles of incorporation and that killed the loan. Judge Jones had been so ill in the spring that he was compelled to go abroad for his health, taking care before he started to provide for such emergencies as could then be foreseen; so that his generous and unfailing help was beyond our reach. And in the midst of all these bitter disappointments Jones Hall gradually assumed shape.

On one occasion, a Saturday afternoon, the bricklayers threatened to put a lien on the building to secure their pay. This meant a half-finished monument to our failure. All the resources were exhausted. There was no money to be had although hours of weary effort had been put forth that day to obtain what was necessary. As a last resort the writer took his last available money, borrowed more of one of the students living with him and presenting the matter to two liberal-minded storekeepers obtained on his own credit the balance needed. Just at six o'clock, as the men were leaving, the money was paid to them that for the time prevented catastrophe. Perhaps it is not unfair to remark in passing that the writer, paying the other parties, carried this debt for the school six years unpaid. At another time, when the laborers threatened to stop the work, until the week's wages were forthcoming the case was laid before Banker Eliason, who handed out four hundred dollars without a line of security, a generous act that will always stand to his honor.

L. R. Moyer, C. H. Budd, and L. G. Moyer, bankers, extended again and again the help that meant almost the life of the school.

The kindness of these and the many other constant friends at Montevideo were bright spots in the local situation that very dark year.

There was only one resolution that stood between success and utter collapse again and again that summer. It was the resolution that as long as there was a single step further that might be taken we would not give up the enterprise, and God always made room for the taking of that one more step until we came through to victory at last.

The builders, "The H. N. Leighton Company," of Minneapolis, who had assumed some of our bills and left their own account largely unpaid, had it in their power at this time to leave the building unfinished and to cause us endless embarrassment. To their credit be it said that they showed us every consideration, finished the building and acted the magnanimous part in every particular.

In September, 1888, the State Association of Congregational churches met at Owatonna. We were in the most embarrassing situation at that time and when a report was called for from the Academy a simple statement of the serious situation was given. Wyman Elliot was in the chair and his generous heart was so appealed to that at the close of the report he started a movement for help by giving a farm outright; Carleton College waived its right to time while Pres. Strong and Prof. Goodhue made effective pleas for Montevi-

deo. Messrs. Morley and Evans took the platform and in half an hour $2,500 was subscribed to help the embarrassed school, gifts coming from every part of the State.

This contribution, so generous and so helpful, was wholly spontaneous—an uprising of that old Congregational love of the Christian school which has left its mark on our nation from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Judge Jones returned also in September, and, although too ill to be seen, arranged for the relief of our most pressing needs by help aggregating nearly $5,000 eventually.

Other obligations had to wait for the necessary changes in our articles of incorporation and the mortgage loan of $6,000. This sum helped our indebtedness on our site and building, but by no means provided for the expenses which had accrued in keeping the academy in session during the period of our greatest poverty. Our local obligations began to be better paid and the sentiment of the village became much more appreciative of the school.

Meanwhile our attendance, and hence our tuitions, were increasing until in these ways we felt that the experimental stage had been passed.

This narrative of struggle brings our story to about 1890, when new forces began to enter into the making of the school. One of the most important of these was the coming of Charles W. Headley, with his gifted wife, to the principalship of the school. Educated in Ripon College and Yale Divinity School, Principal

WALTER S. BENTON.

Headley brought to us a type of manly religion which left its impress upon the character of our graduates for the next decade. There were times during those ten years which tried men's souls and would have induced a less consecrated man to leave the school to find its own way out of its profound difficulties. But Principal Headley stood through storm and stress, and only resigned on the return of harmonious and prosperous days. For this invaluable service he is always honored among us.

In this same year Rev. C. E. Page, of Fergus Falls, was elected president of the Trustees. He instituted a temporary endowment to bring an income of $5,000 a year to the school for three years. The raising of a permanent endowment was also begun by President Page and pledges of $15,000 obtained. But these were so conditioned that upon the relinquishing of the plan the pledges were returned.

The change of name from The Western Minnesota Seminary to Windom Institute was brought about by a petition to the Windom family, stating the desirability of making the monument to the memory of the great statesman such a living institution rather than any mere shaft of marble or tablet of bronze. The dignified character of this document may be judged from the fact that it contained the names of eight governors, present and past.

During these years the school was fortunate in interesting Mr. W. S. Benton, of Minneapolis, in its future. His sympathy with our purposes and his prophetic measure of the future of western Minnesota led him to provide in his will an endowment of $25,000 as

a basis for the permanence of the undertaking. Since the death of Mr. Benton, Mrs. Benton has proved herself one of the most generous and gracious friends of Windom Institute.

The dedication of Jones Hall in 1891 brought to Montevideo a notable company, including the highest officials of the state and men of mark in business and educational circles. The work done by the school won the admiration and permanent friendship of many of these visitors.

The school has always found friends to help in times of great need. In 1897, when the State Association of Congregational Churches met at Montevideo the floating debt of $10,000 was lifted by the representatives of the churches. This movement, headed by Rev. Dr. David N. Beach, established the school in the affection of the churches of the state which have proved their interest by their gifts in the years since. The year 1902 witnessed the payment of the last encumbrance on the property—a mortgage for $4,000 which had been carried for fifteen years.

In our darkest days that ancient and honorable organization, the Congregational Education Society, came to our assistance with its counsel and generous financial aid. There have been several factors, each one of which we are accustomed to say has been of vital importance. The Educational Society, through the visits of its Secretaries and its gifts for the sustenance of the school, is surely one of the most important of these.

To sum up the record of these years, we may say

this was a decade in which Windom Institute made friends—generous, wise, broad-minded friends.

Of what we may call the modern history, where those associated actively in the conduct of the school are concerned, we may not with propriety say the appreciative words which spring so readily to the pen. Marion L. Burton and his wife came to the school in 1900 and are today, by their broad and deep interest, our honored leaders. Miss Hannah M. Griffith, of Carleton and Wellesley training, has filled most admirably the position of preceptress-teacher. Miss Ellen Julin and Miss Theodora Anderson, from Carleton, are our valued assistants. Mrs. Charles H. Budd has for years assumed with acceptance the responsibility for the department of music and the annual concerts under her lead are a popular feature of our work. Frank H. Evans conducts a prosperous business course and Miss Wickstrom teaches needlework and sewing to the young ladies of the school. The latter department we seek means to enlarge into somewhat extended industrial training.

From this rapid survey of history and present fact we hope the reader may have gained an impression that this school has that kind of solidity which is only gained by difficulties overcome. A school which seeks to commemorate a statesman like William Windom should be on an assured basis.

We hope, too, that we have conveyed an adequate impression of the breadth and scope of our plans for this Institute so that it will commend itself to those who love and admire Mr. Windom and believe in christian education.

Windom Institute stands in a favorable position geographically. It is in the center of a thickly settled and rich farming section about two hundred and fifty miles in diameter if the nearest colleges are the limits. This section is to contain scores of small cities and hundreds of prosperous villages, a large proportion of which may look to Windom Institute for the help of hundreds of young people who cannot for one reason or another link themselves with the High Schools. But the great mission of the school is to the boys and girls of the farm whose awakening to the value of an education comes too late for entrance on the graded school curriculum. Many of these have rare qualifications for making noble and able men and women. To give to these, with the underlying foundation of religion, the culture of such a school is to transform money into unfathomed power and influence. To plant in the hearts of such boys and girls an unquenchable thirst for an education is to put within them the force that will win them the higher education in spite of any poverty or discouragement. That in our opinion is the best bestowment for a boy or girl.

We have done that for hundreds at Windom Institute, and it is our mission to plant the same measure of opportunities, of life and of character in thousands of other young lives in the years to come.

To do this responsible work for so large a section of one of the great western commonwealths, and at the same time to carry to coming generations the name and fame of a great Christian statesman is a worthy service to God and mankind. To a share in this service

we invite you and to the solid satisfaction of joining in such a work we welcome you.

Windom the man and the school! May the character of the one be ever more highly cherished and honored, and the service to mankind of the other grow broader and more unselfish!

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